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Fifty-eighth session

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Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 7 October 2003, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Maertens (Vice-Chairman) (Belgium)

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In the absence of Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon), Mr. Maertens (Belgium), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (continued) (A/58/172 and A/58/204)

Agenda item 106: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (continued) (A/58/3, A/58/61-E/2003/5, A/58/67-E/2003/49, A/58/79, A/58/153, A/58/159, A/58/229 and A/C.3/38/L.2)

Agenda item 107: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (continued) (A/58/160)

1. **Mr. Rahman** (Malaysia) said that, despite the goals set at the World Summit for Social Development and their subsequent review, there remained a plethora of social problems, especially poverty and hunger, which had not only not abated, but had sometimes escalated. In the light of the Secretary-General's assertion that, even if developing countries were to adopt sound policies and maximize their use of domestic resources, an additional annual \$50 billion in aid would be needed to attain the Millennium Development Goals, he called on the developed countries to fulfil their commitment to meet their ODA obligations so that the developing countries could endeavour to meet their targets and their own obligations connected with the objectives set by the World Summit, in a spirit of social justice and equity.

2. His Government subscribed to the argument, highlighted in the report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit (A/58/172), that social progress could not be achieved under unstable economic conditions, economic development being a key ingredient of social development. Efforts to promote social development must be an integral part of national development agendas. Convinced that each country had the primary responsibility for and ownership of its economic and social development, Malaysia had always emphasized the concept of development as a major feature of its national development programme, and its social integration policies sought to bring the disenfranchised into the

mainstream of economic and social planning. To that end, there was need of greater cooperation among national agencies, international and regional organizations and civil society as a whole.

3. With a large youth population, Malaysia assigned priority to youth programmes, including the 1997 overhaul of the National Youth Policy with a view to shaping a resilient youth community that could contribute to nation-building, face the challenges of a fast-developing country and participate in humanitarian projects. His country also continued to accord priority to family development programmes that would strengthen the institution of the family in accordance with each society's cultural values, fostering cross-generation family solidarity. In the modern lifestyle in which most family members worked outside the home, Malaysia had established community-based day-care centres for the aged and provided opportunities for older people to retrain, work or study in order to cultivate their independence, self-worth and dignity.

4. Policies and programmes for improving the quality of life and integrating the disabled included the Disabled Persons Act, which protected their rights, and a nationwide web site and media assistance in raising awareness of related issues. Education for disabled persons was also guaranteed through compulsory education accompanied by the necessary facilities, which ensured that disabled children completed full primary education by age 14.

5. **Ms. Al-Qahtani** (United Arab Emirates) said that, owing to the inadequate implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of United Nations summits and conferences, half the world's population in the developing countries now lived in dire economic and social conditions. Convinced that social development could not be achieved without economic development, political stability and consolidated security in those countries, her country reaffirmed the need for prompt implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, without selectivity or separation of social-development requirements from other requirements, including more chances for those countries to participate in the international market through technology transfer and strengthened human capacities.

6. Her country, among the first 50 to attain a high level of human development, had done so by dint of national development policies designed to achieve social justice and security, societal development, family welfare, protection of children's rights, respect

for human rights, human-resource development and a higher standard of living for all citizens, providing free universal education and medical care. The Government had also implemented measures for ensuring a dignified life for all social sectors. It had also established a national training centre that would prepare young people for the global employment market.

7. The Government had paid great attention to promoting the family, which was the main foundation of society, and had enacted family-protection regulations, crowned by a presidential decree. It was also considering legislation that would cover all maternity and family aspects and had participated in numerous international and regional family-related forums. Her Government believed in the right of disabled persons and the elderly to personal dignity and had created centres for the care and rehabilitation of persons with special needs to enable them to continue their education and find suitable jobs. In accordance with Islamic values and traditions, it had never neglected the elderly and provided them with special centres.

8. The authorities attached great importance to promoting social development both in and outside the country and had acceded to bilateral and regional treaties in that field. Her country had made loans and grants to many disaster-stricken countries, in particular, on the initiative of the First Lady, a donation of \$0.5 million. She hoped the Committee's deliberations would succeed in defining the most effective means of creating a "society for all".

9. **Ms. Kang Kyung-wha** (Republic of Korea) said her delegation particularly welcomed the thematic presentation in the Report on the World Social Situation, 2003 (A/58/153), focusing as it did on social vulnerability and providing a fresh perspective for her country's efforts to achieve the well-being of all members of society. Welcoming the recommendations contained in the report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/58/172), she fully supported the emphasis placed on coherence and integration of social and economic policies in achieving development goals. Her country's development experience attested to the need for integrated social and economic policy if development was to be sustainable. The Commission for Social Development, of which her country was an active member, had generated useful ideas on the issues and should continue to address that difficult topic.

10. On the threshold of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, it must be recognized that the family was the basic unit of society and must continue to play a central role in social development. However, it continued to undergo profound changes in line with societal changes and the dictates of the times, currently accelerated by globalization. In her country the archetype of the extended three-generation family under one roof was no more, and the concept of the young providing for the old had lost ground at both ends, a phenomenon all the more significant since South Korea was an ageing country. The authorities were actively promoting policies for integrating the elderly into the social mainstream.

11. Her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's road map for implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its emphasis on gender mainstreaming and hoped that its recommendations would be built upon during the current session in a manner that inspired everyone to take prompt action. Her Government was already focusing on expanding the economic participation of the elderly, starting with plans to create 300,000 suitable jobs in 2004, in parallel with the strengthening of traditional welfare provisions, including the expansion of geriatric hospital care and almost trebling total spending in that area.

12. **Ms. Stažnik** (Croatia) said that, in today's globalized world, complex issues of social development needed to be tackled through coherent, integrated policies involving all social sectors and should be a shared responsibility among all States, with solid United Nations support, in a framework of enhanced cooperation and coordination among its agencies. Her delegation welcomed the report contained in document A/58/172 and reaffirmed its commitment to the principles set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and to the Millennium Development Goals. In pursuit of those principles, her Government had launched an array of social and economic reforms for fostering employment growth and social well-being, such as effective implementation of its National Strategy for the Eradication of Poverty and Social Exclusion and the creation of social partnerships that could put human resources in the limelight and ensure that education and science played a central role in the quest for social progress.

13. Given her Government's conviction that only on the basis of a rights-based, participatory approach in which the family unit had an important role to play, it

supported family-oriented policies and recommended that related issues should be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations family. In that connection, the National Committee for the Observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family had been established to coordinate activities for promoting the rights of each member of the family, with special attention to the rights of children, women and the elderly. The Committee's 2002 National Family Policy defined changes in family structure resulting from war and demographic recession and comprised strategies for creating a family-friendly environment and strengthening democratic family relations, gender equality and spousal partnership.

14. Where persons with disabilities were concerned, Croatia stressed the importance of ensuring their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and had recently adopted a national strategy on their behalf, which envisaged creating the post of ombudsperson and an office for persons with disabilities so as to promote their full participation in society. In that connection, it welcomed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

15. By the same token, in order to motivate young people to become active members of society and participate in decision-making, her Government encouraged youth employment by means of special projects, within the Croatian Employment Service, for acting as a link between the labour market and skilled professionals, providing financial support to the unemployed and career guidance and facilitating job creation by participating in local development initiatives. In that connection, Croatia supported the effective implementation of and follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and looked forward to working closely with other delegations on those issues.

16. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that, although increased longevity was a great success story, it also posed serious challenges for every Member State's response to the reality of an ageing population. The United States, in its commitment to facilitate longer and better lives for its inhabitants, recognized that it involved overhauling its pension and retirement systems, including its social security system, which was unsustainable in its current form. His country, was not only working to harness market forces and Government stewardship in order to strengthen those

systems and health-care schemes for the elderly, but it also assisted other countries in developing strategies that balanced general welfare with the needs of the elderly and was committed to the realization of the goals of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

17. Persons with disabilities had too long been targets of discrimination. Equality and dignity having been reaffirmed as the inherent right of all human beings, the current attention to such persons demonstrated a desire to see them fully integrated into society. The United States had long worked to promote the rights of the disabled and had a comprehensive set of regulations and enforcement mechanisms ensuring real, observable improvement in their lives, which had been implemented by local governments and private business, with enforcement from the Federal Government. The authorities must provide leadership by taking action at home and must discuss the issue in international forums. His country was willing to share its experiences with other States in the elaboration of an international convention in that field.

18. The humanitarian crisis caused by trafficking in persons, of which children were often the victims, underscored the need to halt the breakdown of the family — the cornerstone of society — which not only drove children towards violent crime and self-destructive behaviour, but had adverse consequences for society when they dropped out of school or became pregnant. Hence, the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family presented the ideal opportunity for States to review their practices in that regard and renew their commitment to strengthening the family.

19. **Mr. Fall** (Senegal) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The persistence of poverty, disease and illiteracy was a burden preventing the social development of many levels of global society from reaching its fullest expression. More than ever before, it was important to focus on the need for social harmony, particularly in the countries of the Third World, in order to eliminate poverty and social exclusion. Youth, disabled persons and the elderly were an integral part of society and must enjoy their full rights as citizens. Therefore, Senegal supported the noble objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012, and had hosted the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. Vigorous efforts were needed to prevent illiteracy from slowing the pace of development, and his Government had designed

literacy programmes specifically targeted at youth and children.

20. Persons with disabilities were vulnerable in many countries, but they had the right to social protection and equal opportunities. Senegal had undertaken initiatives to improve their quality of life and social and legal protection, raise their level of education and vocational training and facilitate their access to basic social services and employment. The family was at the heart of his Government's social policy, and the revision of the Family Code currently under way was aimed at raising the status of women within the family by bringing it into line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Youth employment was another priority for his delegation, as well. Finally, he called for the mobilization of adequate human and financial resources to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

21. **Mr. Sallam** (Saudi Arabia) said that, through its development plans, his country had sought to ensure that its citizens enjoyed the social and other benefits of development, as well as the opportunity to make an effective contribution to all areas in that regard. It was also enhancing its national human resources by furthering their practical and vocational skills. Moreover, it had introduced a variety of welfare, training, rehabilitation and other programmes and projects with a view to tackling the social and economic problems which lay behind unemployment. Numerous social development centres and committees in both rural and urban areas were jointly engaged in implementing programmes for the benefit of mothers, children, including the disabled, and young people. Utmost attention had also been devoted to providing appropriate care, rehabilitation and vocational training for the disabled, as well as financial assistance for their families. Centres for the care of the disabled had been opened country-wide and two funds had been established for the purpose of developing human resources, tackling poverty and providing work opportunities.

22. Despite the enormous technological and scientific progress achieved in recent decades, the majority of the world's inhabitants continued to suffer from a wide range of problems which prevented them from achieving the social development to which they aspired and increased the social and economic disparities between the wealthy developed countries and the developing countries plagued by poverty, hunger and war. He therefore called for greater efforts to improve

the mechanisms for development and remove the obstacles to progress. In such times of woe and misfortune, religious values and teachings offered the only basis for ending domination by fellow human beings and preserving human dignity in the interests of security, peace and stability.

23. **Ms. Chojnacka** (the Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that including young people in decision-making and in implementing those decisions was of increasing importance. In addition to the problems of poverty, unemployment and lack of education, the AIDS pandemic deprived many young people of their families at a young age. Moreover, young people between the ages of 15 and 25 were themselves the major group directly affected by the disease. A vast majority of youth suffered from exclusion, which meant lack of participation and access to wealth, education and jobs — in short, no hope. Since so many young people were excluded, they were experts on many of the issues that the United Nations dealt with, yet many felt that their voices were not heard in the discussion of world problems. Frustration led many young people to apathy, or even worse, to aggression and violence.

24. It was encouraging that Member States had succeeded in adopting the Millennium Development Goals, but the spirit to act on them appeared to be lacking. One reason could be that not enough people were aware of their existence, and the Millennium Development Goals campaign was thus welcome. It was also possible that the concept of "We, the peoples", which formed the very basis of the United Nations system, had not yet been fully incorporated into global ways of thinking. Many still divided the world into "us" and "them". It seemed that those divisions were becoming stronger, and youth should be actively involved in turning the tide. Not only could they contribute to a change in attitude, but they should also be involved in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Their views should be heard and they should be employed as advisers, policy makers and field workers.

25. Meaningful youth participation must take place on terms set by youth themselves. Therefore, States should facilitate creation of national youth councils by providing financial support and giving such councils a voice. She also called upon States to use young people as policy advisers, especially concerning youth issues, and to include youth representatives in official delegations to important United Nations meetings.

26. **Mr. Chidyauisiku** (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of Botswana on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the statement of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. While the situation in many developing countries had not changed significantly since the World Summit on Social Development, and in some cases had worsened, his Government remained committed to fulfilling the goals and objectives in the area of social development.

27. As observed in the Report on the World Social Situation 2003 (A/58/153), there was a causal relationship between such social ills as lack of education, poor health, limited access to health care and education on the one hand, and poverty, earning capacity and personal development on the other. Zimbabwe had therefore placed priority on providing basic social services, particularly education and health care, but its achievements had been eroded during the 1990s by the prescriptive policies of the Bretton Woods institutions. Its poverty reduction efforts had also been adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that had decimated the economically active segment of the population. Resources were being diverted from productive sectors to programmes for the care of people living with HIV/AIDS, including AIDS orphans. While the HIV prevalence rate in Zimbabwe had dropped from 35 per cent to 24 per cent, it remained unacceptably high, and increased assistance to fight the scourge would be welcome.

28. Social development in southern Africa had been impeded by the current food crisis, a result of two successive droughts. In a largely agricultural country such as Zimbabwe, land use and ownership had an important bearing on levels of prosperity, as well. His country had embarked on a land reform programme in order to improve the lot of the majority of its population that hitherto had been condemned to poverty. The programme was largely concluded, and had already begun to yield tangible results for many of its people. Lastly, he reiterated his Government's pledge to implement the Copenhagen Programme of Action and its willingness to forge ahead despite seemingly insurmountable hurdles.

29. **Mr. Taranda** (Belarus) said that, in a globalizing world beset with new challenges, the Organization did well to continue to prioritize social development. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that policy coordination and partnership as well as national responsibility were critical in that regard. It also welcomed the agreed conclusions adopted by the

Commission for Social Development at its forty-first session. In particular, Belarus applauded the latter's reaffirmation of the need for renewed and effective partnerships between developed countries and developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition.

30. The social and economic development gaps between countries continued to pose a serious obstacle to sustainable development goals. The United Nations must continue to develop international standards and regulations in that regard, *inter alia*, to ensure equal market access for all. Sustainable development, as well as world peace, security and stability depended on it.

31. His own Government's economic policy was aimed at achieving social development through a social market economy. The policy took account of the results of international socio-economic forums and incorporated relevant social protection provisions. In the context of reforms under way in Belarus, there had been a shift towards targeted social protection and people-centred development.

32. His delegation welcomed the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. In Belarus, there were now some 480,000 persons living with disabilities, which was why the issue of equal rights for such persons was particularly relevant. A government programme focused on the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation and integration of disabled persons in society, which required considerable resources. International technical and financial assistance would be greatly appreciated in that area.

33. Belarus planned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family with a number of initiatives designed to advance the status and prestige of the family. The necessary legislative basis had been established at the domestic level to regulate youth employment. His delegation particularly welcomed the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, which was in line with the development goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

34. Belarus, like other countries, was also faced with the prospect of an ageing population, with 35.8 per cent of the population estimated to reach 60 years of age or older by 2050. The country's social and economic policy would certainly need to be adapted to reflect such a significant demographic change. In that

connection also, the Government was also looking to improve the pension system by combining State as well as private elements. The increased international cooperation on ageing should be applauded, but successful implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing would depend on progress achieved in developing national implementation strategies. The efforts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to provide assistance to Member States for that purpose were appreciated.

35. **Mr. Gallegos** (Ecuador) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of Peru on behalf of the Rio Group and that of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was impossible to achieve sustainable economic development without social development. Social protection must be seen as a productive expenditure and an investment in human capital, as spending on social protection was a determining factor in the growth of countries. Thus, coherence and integration between social policy and economic policy was imperative. Highly indebted developing countries like Ecuador faced serious limitations on their ability to create economic stability and sustainable development because of excessive external debt servicing and trade barriers to their exports. Debt service represented over 40 per cent of Ecuador's annual State budget. Without a just solution to that problem, any economic and social development policy was doomed to failure.

36. He reiterated his Government's commitment to improving the living standard of vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled persons, and especially to protect their human rights. Ecuador had hosted a regional seminar on disability under the auspices of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Participating countries had expressed support for the elaboration of a convention concerning the rights of disabled persons that would reflect the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights.

37. **Mrs. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that much remained to be done to achieve full social development for all, which was a national responsibility requiring greater political commitment at both the national and international levels. The goal of poverty eradication had been the major outcome of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and official development assistance to the developing and least developed countries was crucial to achieve the target of reducing by half the proportion of poor by 2015. It was also equally important to involve those countries in making the decisions and rules applicable to them by

international financial institutions, for instance, in the interest of ensuring their social development and the adoption of integrated socio-economic policies. Other issues vital to the social development of those countries included relief from the crippling burden of external debt, global economic reform, monetary stability and the ability to compete more effectively on the global market.

38. Poverty and inequality, however, would not be eradicated without improvement of the deteriorating infrastructures in African countries in particular, for which purpose international assistance was essential. Since development was an intrinsic human right, there should be no imposition of unilateral economic sanctions or penalties and the right to food and medicine should be guaranteed. Foreign occupation was also a major obstacle to social and economic development and should be brought to an end, thus enabling the inhabitants concerned to exercise sovereignty over their territory. A further imperative was that of effective international cooperation to combat endemic disease, particularly malaria, and the risks associated with AIDS.

39. She hoped that the imminent peace agreement in the Sudan would have a positive impact on the country's social development, particularly in regard to poverty reduction. Older persons in the Sudan received special attention, and she therefore welcomed the recommendations aimed at strengthening implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. Efforts were also under way to integrate the disabled as effective members of Sudanese society, to which end a national council had been established. A national committee had similarly been set up to coordinate activities in connection with the observance of the International Year of the Family. Her Government also devoted particular attention to programmes designed to assist families in performing their social role and strengthen their position as one of the indispensable institutions of society. In conclusion, she said that the international community should make concerted efforts to abandon all narrow and self-interested attitudes in order to work for the peace, stability and well-being of the entire human race.

40. **Mr. Leigh** (United Nations Volunteers (UNV)) said that the notion that the profile and intensity of voluntary action in a society was affected by social and economic policy and required a strategic approach to ensure a favourable environment had first arisen at the World Summit on Social Development and Beyond in 2000. The Summit had recognized volunteering as a

basic vehicle by which youth, older persons, people with disabilities, families and other groups could participate in the economic and social life of societies. Lack of access to meaningful volunteer opportunities was an important feature of the exclusion faced by many social groups.

41. The International Year of Volunteers in 2001 had helped to move the volunteer agenda forward, in particular through the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 56/38 and 57/106. The first International Meeting on Volunteering and the Millennium Development Goals would take place in December in Brazil. He joined with the representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in expressing the hope that Governments would work together with civil society to build a stronger enabling environment for volunteering. Volunteerism was an enormous reservoir of skills, ingenuity, creativity and solidarity that could make major inroads in addressing social exclusion and poverty.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.



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Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 8 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon)
later: Ms. Londoño (Vice-Chairperson) (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 105: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (continued) (A/58/172 and A/58/204)

Agenda item 106: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (continued) (A/58/31, A/58/61-E/2003/5, A/58/67-E/2003/49, A/58/79, A/58/153, A/58/159, A/58/229 and A/C.3/58/L.2)

Agenda item 107: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (continued) (A/58/160)

1 **Mr. Mahiga** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community. Only one year remained before the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, one of whose commitments had been to promote social integration. The report of the Secretary-General on the World Social Situation in 2003 (A/58/153) showed, however, that that undertaking, enshrined as a goal in the Millennium Declaration, was still a long way from being fulfilled.

2 For more than 30 years, developing countries had been calling on developed countries to respect the ODA target of 0.7% of their GDP. To date, however, only five developed countries had attained that target and there was little indication of will on the part of others to follow their example. Yet ODA played a major role in complementing domestic sources of financing development. The fight against poverty - more urgent now than ever - was predicated not only on economic growth but also on the sharing of the benefits of growth.

3 The report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172)

contained recommendations with which his delegation fully concurred. In particular, the report stressed that the social development of developing countries and their capacity to pursue integrated socio-economic policies required their effective participation in international decision-making and norm-setting, including in international financial forums. Yet it was obvious that multilateralism did not as yet extend to the economic sector. The developing countries' inclusion in the work of those bodies was therefore an imperative necessity. At the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development, States had expressed the will to achieve social development for all in a globalizing world and to promote the effectiveness of global institutions in the fight against poverty. The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, established under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation in 2002, was expected in 2004. His delegation hoped that it would generate practical ideas for changes that would make the globalization process more equitable and its benefits more widely accessible.

4 The report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/58/160) correctly pointed out that the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action would require sustained action at all levels and that the success or otherwise of the implementation process would be manifested at the national level. In recognition of that reality, his Government had developed a national policy on ageing, which represented a significant step forward in promoting the rights of older persons in Tanzania. Furthermore, his Government was preparing to host a regional workshop on aging and poverty in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Help-Age International. The workshop was of particular importance at a time where grandparents were often obliged to assume parental duties owing to the tragic consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The role of older women being thus likely to develop still further, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in policies on ageing acquired added significance.

5 **Ms. Londoño**, (Colombia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

6 **Mr. Kaderi** (Morocco) said that the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth

¹ To be issued.

special session of the General Assembly had represented a positive turning point by accentuating the need to improve the living standards of a large part of the world's population and the importance of the fight against poverty, marginalization, unemployment and disease. Those orientations had since been confirmed at other summits and United Nations conferences on economic and social issues. In that connection his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B dealing with the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of important conferences and summits held under the auspices of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. The international community was called upon to spare no effort in coming to the assistance of developing countries so as to enable them to meet their development goals and thus improve the standard of living of their respective populations.

7. With regard to social development, Morocco had adopted a national strategy aimed at eliminating poverty, improving the quality of social services, boosting employment, developing education, fighting illiteracy and improving the physical and social well-being of the whole population and, in particular, of its poorest sections.

8. Emphasizing the need to implement the 20/20 system of distribution adopted at the Copenhagen World Summit, according to which at least 20% of the national budget and 20% of donor assistance were to be devoted to essential social programmes, he said that Morocco had, with that end in view, prepared a report on essential social services in collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. In Morocco, 15.6% of ODA and 17.76% of the national budget were allocated to those services. Moreover, his Government had, in 1999, set up a Social Development Agency whose main purpose was to provide institutional support to organizations submitting social development projects for the country's poorest regions. Those organizations acted in partnership with major social and economic actors and participated in the preparation of projects with international partners such as the European Union and UNDP.

9. As regards disabled persons, Morocco had taken steps to fight the discrimination to which such persons were exposed and had devised a programme of action executed in collaboration with specialized agencies of the United Nations. His country was among the seven

members of the group of African States within the Working Group set up by the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral convention on protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities to prepare and present a draft text that would serve as the basis for negotiation by member States and observers at the Ad Hoc Committee.

10. In August 2003 his Government had organized a conference on youth with the participation of representatives of many religions, cultures and civilizations. On that occasion, King Mohamed VI had said that youth was the bearer of great hopes, embodied the values of peace, justice and cooperation, and invested its energies in the service of sustainable development.

11. The family was the core of his country's social fabric and his Government therefore supported all measures in preparation for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.

12. **Ms. Sonaike** (Nigeria), speaking on agenda items 105 and 106, said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Noting that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172) called for the creation of an enabling environment and the adoption of effective measures, including conflict prevention, in order to meet the objectives of overall development and poverty eradication, she said that that was one of the reasons for the establishment of NEPAD by African leaders.

13. Her country was, however, concerned by the widening gap in social development existing between North and South countries.

14. She welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation for partnership between developed and developing countries as a complement to the latter's efforts to promote their social development and reduce poverty. However, it was essential to address the issue of globalization, which was generating severe financial crises, prolonged economic insecurity, greater social inequalities and marginalization in the developing world.

15. Trade liberalization was also having a most negative impact on the family by deepening family

poverty and generating chronic poverty in the least developed countries. Aware of the family's major role in national development, Nigeria was endeavouring to provide parents with the means of discharging their duty to their children. It had developed youth employment policies and was currently implementing a programme of action for the development of youth. The United Nations, all Member States, the relevant NGOs and the private sector must, for their part, collaborate actively in addressing the problem of poverty, with special emphasis on three types of intervention: provision of basic social services, promotion of human rights, and creation of employment opportunities.

16. Thanks to United Nations activities in the social field, growing attention was today given to vulnerable groups. In April 2002, the Second World Assembly on Ageing had resulted in the adoption of a political declaration and of the Madrid Plan of Action. Her Government had always acknowledged the role of the elderly in social development and had incorporated their needs in its national planning. She also welcomed the attention given to the second session of Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, and hoped that the Working Group working on the text of the convention would complete the draft at an early date.

17. In conclusion, she expressed full agreement with the view of the Commission on Social Development concerning the need for focused dialogue among development partners on the crucial issue of social development. The process was a complex and important one that required active commitment and support on the part of all development actors in both developed and developing countries.

18. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda), speaking on agenda item 105, said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and was committed to participating actively as a member of the Working Group of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

19. Aware of the cohesion of the economic and social dimensions of the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration, Uganda had adopted a poverty

eradication plan with the following four fundamental goals: rapid and sustainable economic growth and structural transformation; good governance and security; increased ability of the poor to raise their incomes, and enhanced quality of life for the poor. Some positive results had already been achieved. Primary education was free and compulsory everywhere in her country, school enrolment rates were high and the youth literacy rate exceeded 80%. Gender equality was being promoted in schools as well as in the political sphere, over 87% of young females being literate and 25% of parliamentary seats being held by women.

20. Environmental sustainability stood at over 24% of the total nationally protected land area, and 79% of the total population now had access to improved sanitation.

21. The fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases was inextricably linked to social development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, where it had profound economic, social and security implications. Her country was anxious to familiarise itself with practices and strategies appropriate to its situation. Support was needed in connection with the following problems: anti-retroviral therapy and opportunistic infections; orphans and vulnerable children; evaluation models; capacity building; advocacy; research; vaccine development; and internally displaced persons in conflict areas.

22. **Mr. Nsemi** (Congo), speaking on agenda item 106, associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Almost 10 years after the World Summit for Social Development and three years after the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, it was evident that the reasons for holding the Summit were as present as ever. In his report on the world social situation in 2003 (A/58/153), the Secretary-General rightly stressed the close links between vulnerability and poverty. Indeed, it was the poor who suffered most severely from economic upheavals, natural disasters and conflict situations as well as from scourges such as HIV/AIDS.

23. The recurrent conflicts that had taken place in his country during the past 10 years had jeopardized all development efforts. Today, 70% of the population was living below the poverty line. Other consequences included increased numbers of street children, child

trafficking, prostitution and above all massive unemployment, principally among the young. The Government regarded youth employment as a moral as well as a political, economic and social goal and had accordingly launched a multi-annual programme to be executed in all relevant activity sectors.

24. At a more general level, the Government had launched a programme known as "New Hope", whose goals were elimination of unemployment, poverty reduction and improvement of access to basic services and of the quality of life. It had also drawn up a detailed programme for the years 2004-2009 in harmony with the document on poverty reduction strategy currently being negotiated with the Bretton Woods institutions.

25. His delegation was grateful to the World Bank, UNDP and the European Union for their assistance to his Government's programme of demobilization and reintegration of former soldiers, as well as to UNDP and UNICEF for their support of his Government's efforts aimed at consolidating peace and promoting development.

26. As regards the struggle against HIV/AIDS, a national strategy based on decentralization and on a multi-sectoral approach had been developed for the period 2003-2007. It was being implemented by the National Council to Combat HIV/AIDS, placed under the direct authority of the Head of State.

27. Lastly, he endorsed the conclusions of the forty-first session of the Commission on Social Development devoted to national and international cooperation in the service of social development, and welcomed their approval by the Economic and Social Council at its main session in 2003.

28. **Mr. Lamba** (Malawi), after associating himself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, said that his Government placed the eradication of poverty at the centre of the national development agenda.

29. His Government was endeavouring to complement market mechanisms, correct market distortions, maintain social stability and create a national economic environment that promoted sustainable growth and rural development. Malawi's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper provided guidance in

the implementation of programmes and projects targeting vulnerable groups, including women, youth, orphans and persons with disabilities. The Malawi Social Action Fund III was harnessing the knowledge and expertise of NGOs and donors towards improving the quality of life of the whole population.

30. HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis were continuing to reverse years of hard-won gains in the economic and social fields in his country. Limited institutional and human capacity and financial resource constraints stood in the way of attaining the goals of the programme of action, but it was gratifying to note that more donor partners were extending assistance to meet the resource requirements of the national response.

31. His delegation welcomed the initiatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in identifying priorities for policy-related research on ageing in Africa, and requested that similar technical assistance be extended at the national level, especially in the area of capacity building.

32. His Government fully supported the establishment of a working group by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. It also welcomed the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.

33. **Ms. Critchlow** (Guyana), speaking on agenda item 105, associated herself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Far from improving, the situation of millions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean had worsened overall. The UNDP Human Development Report for 2003 showed that 54 countries were now poorer than in 1990; life expectancy in 34 countries had fallen primarily as a result of HIV/AIDS, and more people in 21 countries were suffering from hunger than in 1990. Collective and immediate action by the international community was needed in order to avert further decline.

34. At the national level, the Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy and the National Development Strategy Documents, prepared in consultation with civil society organizations, underpinned the adoption of an integrated socio-economic approach to national

policy-making. The current level of poverty was to be halved by the year 2015, significant attention being given to the most vulnerable populations in rural and interior regions.

35. Notwithstanding international assistance and the reduction of the debt-servicing burden, Guyana, as a heavily indebted country, did not have sufficient resources to meet the needs of the social sector, particularly in terms of education, health and housing. Generally speaking, the worsening of the terms of international trade translated into an insufficient and unstable supply of finances for development. That situation had to be remedied.

36. **Ms. Yakivu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), speaking on agenda items 105 and 106, said that her delegation subscribed to the statements of the representatives of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community. It also supported General Assembly resolution 57/163 as well as the decisions adopted at the twenty-fourth special session, the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and programme of action, and NEPAD.

37. She appealed to the international community to assist her country, through development funds, to recover from a war that had lasted for more than six years and had destroyed its socio-economic infrastructure, and to attain its priority goals in the sphere of social development.

38. At the national level, the Transitional Government was setting up machinery for the reeducation and guidance of orphans, young unemployed persons and street children, of whom there were very many in a country torn by war, and was also taking steps to provide social services for aged persons. It had reformed the Labour Code with a view to guaranteeing the rights of disabled persons and had adopted a series of measures aimed at promoting the rights of women and children and to consolidate family ties, in particular through an awareness-raising campaign on registration of marriages and births.

39. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) associated herself with the statement of the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Syria continuously improved its political laws and economic and social programmes aimed at protecting its most vulnerable citizens, and periodically re-examined the steps taken to improve their quality of

life. The national association to combat unemployment had created 16 000 jobs and devoted millions of Syrian pounds to the implementation of national projects for the creation of employment opportunities. Her Government was endeavouring to ensure equality of opportunities not only in the sphere of employment but also in education and health.

40. The Syrian Arab Republic participated actively in regional meetings concerned with the protection of aged and disabled persons. It had recently taken part in the second session of the Ad Hoc Committee for the elaboration of a comprehensive and integral international convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of disabled persons, and supported the adoption of such a convention.

41. The Syrian Arab Republic considered that it was impossible to speak of social development in an environment where the right to self-determination and fundamental human rights were not respected. In that respect, the situation in the Arab territories occupied by Israel, Israel's attacks against Lebanon and its daily exactions in Palestine ran counter to resolutions adopted by the international community and contributed towards the worsening of the economic, humanitarian and social situation in the occupied territories, as could be seen from the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/88-E/2003/84). Unless the international community took the necessary steps to end it, that humanitarian disaster was liable to have tragic consequences.

42. **Ms. Mohamed** (Kenya) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Kenya's development policies were always initiated at grass-roots level with the participation of local communities. That approach had been used in formulating the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as well as to the Economic Recovery for Wealth and Job Creation and National Development Plans.

43. The newly elected Government of Kenya had embarked on programmes to address social problems, in particular in the sphere of primary education, job creation and health. As regards the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases, it hoped that the adoption of paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration would enable developing countries to import generic drugs.

44. The following four principles, dictated by the conviction that no Government could promote development without the support of the private sector and civil society, had guided the preparation of the PRSP: giving voice to the poor; participation and ownership; equitable distribution of national resources; and transparency and accountability.

45. Recalling the developed countries' commitment to increase their ODA to 0.7% of their GDP, she appealed to the international community to fight poverty and to reinforce cooperation. The developing countries had long suffered from the non-coherent policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which gave prominence to macro-economic questions at the expense of social needs. Her country called for reforms of those institutions that would involve the developing countries in their decision-making processes. The collapse of the WTO Ministerial Conference at Cancun, Mexico, was regrettable and could have been avoided. Its failure should serve as a lesson for the future and talks should resume sooner rather than later, adjustments being made to ensure inclusive, effective and meaningful participation by all members of WTO. Her delegation also suggested the holding of a conference to discuss the social aspects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

46. In conclusion, she stressed the need for realistic and achievable targets.

47. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His Government attached particular importance to the integration of social and economic policies and was implementing the Good Governance for Human Security Programme, an integrated policy document with economic, social, environmental, political and legal aspects. Notwithstanding the progress made, Mongolia was still facing serious difficulties. Poverty affected about a quarter of the population by reason of the severe climate disasters which had struck the country for three consecutive years, depriving many rural people of all means of subsistence. The Government had therefore made poverty reduction one of its main priorities, committing itself to the MDG target of halving absolute poverty by 2015. It had also pledged to meet the poverty reduction criteria established by the Asian Development Bank

and had finalized its Final Poverty Reduction Paper linking macro-economic and sectoral policy measures.

48. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on cooperatives in social development (A/58/159), he was gratified to note that Member States continued to support the development of cooperatives and to recognize their contribution to social development. His delegation attached particular importance to the conclusions and proposals for future action contained in Section III of the report, which could be useful to Member States as well as to the United Nations. However, discussions with members of the Secretariat and with other delegations suggested that the Secretary-General's future reports on that subject might perhaps be more usefully focused on some particular aspect of cooperative development. Thus, the 2005 report might be devoted to the issue of strengthening the role of cooperatives in the eradication of poverty, in line with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for Social Development according to which the Commission was to undertake a review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty in 2006. His delegation intended to submit a draft resolution to that effect for the Committee's consideration.

49. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in order to tackle social problems it was necessary above all to understand their root causes. Concern for the human being, both as an individual and as a member of a social group, stood at the heart of social development.

50. His Government, convinced that there could be no meaningful economic development without social development, had decided to place the latter at the top of its list of priorities, as witness the adoption of a National Charter in February 1994 and of a Macro-Policy in November of the same year, both documents including major sections devoted to the development of human resources. It had passed appropriate legislation, refined already existing policy guidelines and plans of action, and launched training and research programmes providing for preventive and corrective measures aimed at the protection and promotion of the rights of children (orphans, destitute children and children affected by war and/or displacement), women, youth, the elderly and the disabled, and strengthening the family unit. For obvious reasons, his country attached

great importance to the problems of disabled people and had since independence given priority to their integration in Eritrean society. His delegation welcomed the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

51. Stressing the negative impacts of unsolved problems and conflicts on social development, in particular in his country, he said that any development could take place only in a country free from conflict and the fear of conflict. The international community must unite in the effort to control the new international forces, including globalization, that were threatening to undermine social development.

52. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, referred to paragraph 56 of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up of the World Summit on Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172) and recalled the importance of coordinated and participatory policies for the attainment of social development goals. His Government, mindful of the fact that Mali's population was 70% rural and that agriculture accounted for 42% of GDP, had committed itself to making intensive agriculture the motive force of the country's development, with cotton occupying a preponderant place. In that connection, he deplored the large subsidies granted to European and American cotton producers, which penalized African producers.

53. His Government had undertaken a number of initiatives on behalf of persons in difficulties, the elderly, the family, the disabled and youth, such as the decision to proclaim the month of October "National Solidarity Month"; the establishment in 1996 of a research institute on gerontology and geriatrics pursuant to the World Plan of Action on Ageing; the creation of a National Council for the Elderly to coordinate the activities of regional and local senior citizens' associations; a reform of family law and preparations for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, proposal made to the African Union, through the Pan-African Union of Disabled Persons, to declare 1999-2009 the "African Decade of the Disabled"; and incorporation of the problem of unemployment and

underemployment in the Government's sectoral policies and strategies for fighting poverty.

54. Expressing strong regret at the failure of the WTO negotiations at Cancun, he called for greater justice and equity in international trade relations with a view to promoting economic development in all countries.

55. **Mr. Boonpracong** (Thailand) said that his country attached special importance to the two themes of the Secretary-General's report (A/58/172), namely policy coherence and partnership (paragraph 6 of the report). Absorbing the experience of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Thailand had adopted people-centred and coherent economic and social policies, as reflected in the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006). Its economic policies designed to alleviate poverty and promote employment were pursued in harmony with social policies aimed at strengthening local communities, protecting vulnerable groups and promoting human development. The "One Village, One Product" scheme was designed to improve people's quality of life by enabling them to live on their own produce. The establishment of a Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in 2002 had further improved social integration, coordination and policy coherence while meeting more effectively the needs of vulnerable groups.

56. At the international level, Thailand had launched several initiatives designed to promote partnership between developed and developing countries, in particular the Economic Cooperation Strategy between Cambodia, the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, Myanmar and Thailand and the Asia-wide partnership known as the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, initiated by Thailand in 2002. His country was going to host the forthcoming APEC summit to be held in Bangkok from 18 to 21 October 2003. Beyond the region, Thailand played a contributive role in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and had, jointly with UNCTAD, established the International Institute for Trade and Development.

57. Reviewing his Government's activities on behalf of various vulnerable groups, he said that Thailand was committed to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons and was a member of the working group set up by the Ad Hoc Committee. It was convinced that strong family units were essential to the well-being of society and the

nation as a whole. A Bureau of Women's and Family Affairs had recently been established within the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. A series of national activities were to be launched on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The 2nd National Plan for Older Persons (2002-2021) dealt with the question of social integration of the elderly, and the current National Plan on Women's Development also took the ageing perspective into account. Lastly, his Government intended to undertake educational reforms with a view to strengthening the capacities of young people and preparing them to assume entrepreneurship roles in the future.

58. In conclusion, he reiterated his country's commitment to pursue social development goals in a spirit of respect for human rights and dignity, as well as to nurture a stable, secure, just and caring society.

59. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, deplored the bleak situation described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/172), and shared his regret that eight years after the Copenhagen Declaration on social development, the commitments made on that occasion and reiterated at the Millennium Summit were still so far from being realised.

60. As a national of a country of South Asia, a region where over 30% of the population was living below the poverty line, he particularly appreciated the Secretary-General's view that conflict prevention was an integral part of the quest for social progress, development and reduction of poverty. It was unfortunate that his country's calls for sustained and meaningful dialogue for peaceful settlement of long-standing disputes in the region had not met with a positive response.

61. Recalling the definition of the family appearing in article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he said that while family forms had changed over the years, that definition remained as true as ever. Viewing the family as the first line of defence against social chaos, Pakistan wished to see the family unit in the Division of Economic and Social Affairs to be strengthened and given the necessary means to promote mainstreaming of the family in the programmes and work of the United Nations.

62. His country's profoundly respectful attitude, rooted in tradition and the injunctions of Islam,

towards its approximately 8.5 million older citizens was reflected in the creation of a national task force of distinguished senior citizens to conduct studies and surveys with a view to recommending policies and programmes to be formulated in conformity with realities on the ground. Pakistan was also engaged in preparing its national MDG report dealing, in particular, with issues such as empowerment of local communities and women, restoration of participatory democracy, and accountable governance.

63. In conclusion, he said that Pakistan had set out on the path to sustained growth and development and was determined to pursue that goal.

64. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon), speaking on agenda items 105 and 106, associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His delegation subscribed fully to the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in document A/58/172, with particular emphasis on the importance of coordinated and participatory policies in promoting the goals of social development (paragraph 56). In his view, such coordination required not only the integration of economic and social policies but also a better strategy to promote a culture of peace and conflict prevention, as well as the increased participation of all economic and social partners. Concerted action had to be taken at both national and international levels in order to overcome the adverse effects of globalization.

65. Welcoming the new international initiatives on behalf of youth promotion, namely the world employment programme of ILO and the Secretary-General's youth employment network, as well as the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for least developed, landlocked and small developing island countries, he appealed to the developed countries to honour the commitments they had undertaken in the sphere of trade, debt alleviation and development assistance in order to encourage the efforts being made by the developing countries and help them to overcome their problems due to poverty, conflicts and HIV/AIDS.

66. His Government, deeply committed to fighting poverty and firmly convinced that strengthening of civil and political rights went hand in hand with meeting economic and social needs, had introduced a number of anti-corruption measures as well as

measures in the fields of education and health. It had also adopted a sectoral policy declaration on health focused on the fight against epidemics, a new Schools Act giving prominence to basic education, a plan of action on nutrition and food security, a national policy document on employment and a declaration on a national strategy to combat poverty. It was eager to fulfil its commitments and to ensure the effective and sustained realization of development, and hoped to be able to count on the international community's support in its endeavours.

67. **Ms. Sherpa** (Nepal) said that her country, aided by the international community, had endeavoured to improve the quality of life of its population, 85 % of which was rural. Population growth, economic recession, poverty, lack of infrastructures and industries and the Maoists' destructive policy all combined in slowing down development, but her Government, which was currently implementing its tenth five-year plan, was doing its best to deal with problems in the fields of health, education, provision of drinking water, sanitation, decentralization and agriculture. It was also tackling such problems as youth employment, trafficking in women and gender inequalities, and had invited the national commission on women's affairs to draw up a plan of action for the promotion of women.

68. Her country considered that social development had to be approached in a coherent and concerted manner. Social problems concerned not only individual countries but the international community as a whole. Globalization should strengthen economic and social development processes worldwide.

69. Her Government welcomed the efforts being made in connection with the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and called for the implementation of the world programme of action for youth adopted in 1995 as well as of the Madrid declaration and plan of action on ageing. It was, however, concerned by the fact that, despite the Monterrey Consensus, the ODA goal of 0.7% of the developed countries' GDP was still far from being attained, but hoped that international cooperation – both South-South and between developed and developing countries – would result in greater assistance to least developed, landlocked and small developing island countries.

70. **Ms. Lalji** (Suriname), speaking on agenda item 106, said that it was important to ensure youth participation not only in consultations prior to decision-making but also in the decision-making process itself. Progress still needed to be made in that area.

71. Women, children and young people were generally the first to be affected by crises and the family unit was often threatened. Studies showed that children growing up in a family environment had a better chance of becoming adults well integrated in society. The family unit had to be protected.

72. But there was also a positive side to the medal. Young Surinamese were participating in the decision-making and policy formulation process. At the regional level, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) provided for the appointment of two youth ambassadors in each Member State.

73. The Caribbean countries had the second highest (after Africa) number of persons affected by HIV/AIDS. Such persons often being young, the youth ambassadors played an important role in fighting that scourge, as also did UNICEF and UNAIDS whose assistance was greatly appreciated. Many young people in developing countries were obliged to resort to prostitution in order to survive, thus running the risk of catching sexually transmissible diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. The problem was more serious than might be thought, for such diseases endangered the development and even the survival of communities. It was therefore essential to consult the young in those matters and to finance the necessary programmes. Partnerships should also be created between young people and their respective Governments and between young people and regional and international organizations. The problems in question could not be resolved in isolation.

74. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference), speaking on agenda item 106, said that his organization fully supported the ongoing initiatives in connection with the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and in particular the work on the family being done within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

75. The natural family being the basic social unit, his Organization supported the goal of strengthening the family in order to build a healthy society. The representative of Iran, speaking as Chairman of the

OIC Group at the United Nations, had stressed the importance its member States attached to family values and to the need to strengthen national capacities for addressing family concerns. Representatives of other OIC States, notably Benin, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, had drawn attention to the opportunity offered by the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 to strengthen national and international institutions engaged in efforts to address problems in that field.

76. At the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly the OIC had advocated certain measures, such as the issuance of declarations by Heads of State and the setting up of national coordination mechanisms to harmonize policies, develop programmes in support of the family, and facilitate mainstreaming of family concerns in all national development efforts. The United Nations had a crucial role to play in that connection, and strengthening of the family unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was therefore desirable.

77. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agricultural Organization) said that the social dimension of rural development was an important part of FAO's mandate. FAO was undertaking normative work on various aspects of the impact of population ageing on rural development. That impact was determined by factors such as population density, economic productivity, economies of scale, agricultural technologies, and social and economic policies.

78. The shift towards an older age structure could, in certain settings, lead to livelihood strategies becoming less forward-looking and could evolve towards less labour-intensive activities. It could also lead to problems such as isolation, poor nutrition and insufficient means of subsistence, particularly in the case of women. The trend should not, however, be viewed as entirely negative. The experience and skills of older persons were irreplaceable. While the process of population ageing posed numerous challenges to food security and rural development, it also offered a unique opportunity to rethink existing developmental strategies.

79. The HIV/AIDS epidemic constituted a major obstacle to rural development and to the fight against poverty and hunger, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Because it took its greatest toll among young adults, the epidemic had a devastating impact on human

resources, economic productivity, management of natural resources, and social organization and economic development in general. Since agriculture was the largest industry in many AIDS-stricken countries, the epidemic directly affected agricultural production and security of food supplies. It was essential that rural development strategies should appropriately reflect the realities of the HIV/AIDS scourge. FAO, for its part, was working with affected member countries and other partners such as IFAD, WFP and UNAIDS to develop strategies designed to mitigate its effects.

80. Education and training were among the most powerful weapons in the fight against rural poverty. Unfortunately, however, their importance in that connection was often overlooked. Farmers with basic education were better equipped to make more informed decisions both for themselves and for their communities and to participate actively in promoting economic, social and cultural dimensions of development. Those who had to find work outside the farm were also more likely to be hired if they possessed basic literacy skills. With a view to improving the education of rural children and youth, FAO and UNESCO had jointly launched a partnership initiative on education for rural people at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. More than 60 partners among international agencies, Governments and NGOs had already joined the initiative. The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative (SARD) and the proposal to create a rural investment forum also deserved mention in that connection.

81. With regard to food security, the Heads of State and Government assembled in Rome in June 2002 had renewed their commitments made at the World Food Summit in 1996 and had called on all parties to reinforce their efforts to form an international alliance against hunger.

82. It had to be noted, however, that the situation gave grounds for grave concern. If the current trend continued, the goal of halving the number of the world's hungry people would take a hundred years to attain.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

83. **Ms. Kalay-Kleitman** (Israel) thought it absurd that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic should accuse Israel of violating human rights and

humanitarian law. The Syrian dictatorship was occupying a neighbour State and was known to be supporting, financing and sheltering terrorists in violation of the basic standards of international law. It ought to be the last to speak of justice and law. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic had referred to the humanitarian crisis affecting the Palestinian people. The real humanitarian crisis was in Israel, where day-to-day life was so perturbed that families did not know whether they would be coming home safe and sound in the evening. The measures taken by Israel in response to atrocities committed on its territory, such as suicide bombings, were acts of self-defence.

84 **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that using terrorism as an excuse for attacking another nation was an obvious violation of international law and of numerous Security Council resolutions, as well as a shameful act. Every country in the Middle East had a right to speak of terrorism except Israel, the country that had brought terrorism to the region from the first day of its creation. Many members of the Israeli Government, including ministers and even Prime Ministers, had been members of terrorist groups such as Haganah. Some were even being pursued by international justice.

85 The massacres of Sabra, Chatila and Jenin should not be forgotten. Israel ought to be ashamed to speak of respect of international law, for it had been the first to refuse to comply with Security Council resolutions concerning the occupied Arab lands. The military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic and the violation of Lebanon's air space, condemned by the entire international community, were the most recent violations.

86 The Committee must also remember the Palestinians, whom Israel had displaced, uprooted and driven out from the first day of its creation and who had found refuge in many countries, including Syria.

87 The situation in the occupied Arab territories was the result of continuing Israeli occupation and of the day-to-day oppression of the Palestinians. Security would not be guaranteed until the occupied lands were returned to their lawful owners.

88 The Syrian Arab Republic was an independent sovereign country whose conduct was dictated by its national interests.

89 **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine), exercising her right to reply to the representative of Israel, said that when Israel spoke of terrorism it could on no account dissimulate or deny the fact that it was an occupying power and was present as such in Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The reason for the present problems was the existence for more than three decades of an occupation - transformed over the years into a brutal and violent form of colonialism - that denied the rights and the very existence of the Palestinian people and contributed towards the phenomenon of suicide bomb attacks against civilians, which the Palestinian Authority had, moreover, condemned on several occasions.

90 Since Israel had tried to justify its military action against the Palestinians, and now against the Syrian Arab Republic, by the fight against terrorism and its infrastructures, she wished to point out that nothing could justify such serious violations of international humanitarian law. Thirty-six years of military and colonial occupation by Israel were at the origin of today's problems, and in particular of acts of terror, which were to be condemned.

91 **Mr. Roschdy** (Egypt) asked when the Committee was to embark on the question of the statute of the Family Unit. The information to be provided in that connection should not be ignored on any account.

92 **The Chairman** said that she would raise the question with the Bureau. The matter would be discussed in the next few days.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.



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Chairman: Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon)

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03-54993 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 3 10 p.m.

Agenda item 108: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/58/3, A/58/87-E/2003/82, A/58/125, A/58/131-S/2003/703, A/58/165, A/58/222 and A/58/223; A/C.3/58/L.3, L.4, L.5 and L.6)

Agenda item 109: International drug control (A/58/3, A/58/124, A/58/131-S/2003/703 and A/58/253)

1. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), introducing the two items, said transnational organized crime was a growing threat and was expanding into new areas such as human trafficking. Electronic technology enabled criminals to launder money, commit large-scale fraud and disseminate paedophile material, and had facilitated terrorism. His Office had developed an index of organized crime, combining data for more than 100 countries. Sub-Saharan Africa appeared to be the region most affected by organized crime, followed by Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. The countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eastern Europe were countries of both origin and transit for human trafficking, with the industrialized world being the primary destination. There was a real risk of a "criminal divide": the developing world was experiencing high and increasing levels of crime, while the developed countries showed stable or declining levels. The data suggested a clear link between the failure of some countries to achieve sustainable development and the growth of organized crime; World Bank studies on the comparative causes of violent crime, for example, showed a strong correlation between crime and high levels of inequality.

2. Turning to the use and production of illicit drugs, he said there had been a sizeable reduction in opium and coca cultivation in Asia and the Andean countries, with Colombia and Afghanistan the principal remaining sources of those drugs. In the Golden Triangle area, if recent achievements were sustained, a 100-year effort to control drug production would come to an end. In Colombia as well, there had been a sustained reduction of coca cultivation during the previous two years. In Afghanistan, however, opium farmers and traffickers had earned about \$2.5 billion in 2002, about half the country's gross domestic product.

3. While there had been a reduction in cocaine and heroin abuse in some major North American and

Western European markets, new markets had emerged in Eastern European States, the Russian Federation and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and China. Furthermore, drug abuse increased the threat of a major health pandemic in HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, were forced to devote scarce resources to curbing cannabis cultivation, trafficking and abuse and the lenient policies of some countries with regard to cannabis were therefore all the more disheartening. The United Nations Ecstasy and Amphetamine Global Survey 2003 had shown that synthetic drugs, such as amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), could become the world's most serious drug problem.

4. A number of steps had been taken to deal with the changing crime and drug situation. He welcomed the entry into force on 29 September 2003 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which provided a new framework for international cooperation, and, noting that most of the signatories were developing countries, called on all countries which had not done so, in particular the developed countries, to ratify the Convention. He recalled that the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, had supported his Office's work to fight terrorism and he welcomed the Commission's proposal to convene a high-level segment of the Eleventh Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as well as the recent successful conclusion of negotiations on the draft United Nations Convention against Corruption and called on Member States to give their full support to its adoption.

5. The ministerial meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had reconfirmed the importance of demand reduction in the context of an integrated and balanced approach. Significant challenges lay ahead and issues such as poverty, disasters, HIV/AIDS and drugs all contributed to human suffering, interfered with conflict resolution and hindered development, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Existing instruments on drugs, organized crime, terrorism and, soon, corruption, must be accompanied by concrete actions to reduce drug abuse and treat drug users.

6. The Office on Drugs and Crime had accumulated a body of knowledge, expertise and best practices. Earlier in 2003, the Office had been reorganized with a view to delivering better-quality programmes and

improving value for money. For example, for the first time, a consolidated budget for 2004-2005 had been presented which integrated drugs, crime, terrorism and resource requirements into a single operational context and included an in-depth review of the Office's performance in 2002-2003. Research and analysis and field operations had been strengthened and programmes relating to legislative assistance, transnational organized crime, human trafficking, corruption, terrorism and money-laundering were being implemented by small teams of experts in priority areas. In that context, he thanked countries which had made voluntary contributions to those programmes.

7. The relevance of his Office in future years would be measured by its ability to meet the demands of Member States for new legal instruments and policies; research and analysis; and field-based operations for capacity-building and implementing conventions. Given the Office's modest resources, it must build strategic partnerships, and he noted, for example, the development of a joint programme with the World Bank targeting a dozen countries where drugs and crime issues affected the Bank's activities.

8. In addition, he recalled the Paris Pact adopted in May 2003 with regard to drug- and crime-related problems along trafficking routes between Central Asia and Europe and the June session of the Security Council on Afghanistan and that country's drug and crime problems. He noted the strong commitment of the Commonwealth of Independent States to counter the international dimension of Afghanistan's drug problems. Furthermore, his Office's relationship with the Counter-Terrorism Committee continued to grow. Cooperation with the private sector was also being reinforced, as for example in an innovative pilot programme in Mexico to combat kidnapping, co-financed by the corporate sector, the Government and the Office on Drugs and Crime. That successful model could be implemented in other countries where kidnapping was common.

9. The goal of sustainable development required not only fair and efficient sharing of the resources of the planet but also the creation of an environment of human security and a life free from fear of "uncivil behaviour". Fighting the threats of terrorism, violence, crime and drug abuse required vision, political determination and resources. Despite its limited resources, his Office would continue to work in the most effective manner possible to meet the needs of

Member States and he therefore called on Member States to support his Office in its work.

10. **Mr. Spatafora** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, agreed that there must be a common response to the challenges facing the international community. He noted with interest the index of organized crime developed by the Office on Drugs and Crime and, given the very different situations in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan and the economies in transition of East Europe, wondered if the Executive Director had any suggestions on how to address those very different socio-economic and geopolitical situations in general and, in particular, how to improve the effectiveness of cooperation between his Office and the European Commission.

11. **Mr. Stelzer** (Austria) said the relatively bleak picture painted by the Executive Director highlighted the need for focused action and increased cooperation, and he welcomed the new partnerships developed with the World Bank and the Counter-Terrorism Committee on such issues as drugs and terrorism, which had an immediate effect on populations and society. He wondered whether the Office could likewise reach out to new partners in civil society in order to increase awareness of the drug problem and thereby increase public support for government action.

12. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan) felt that, despite concerns about the situation in Afghanistan, there were encouraging trends, such as the reduction in drug production in the Golden Triangle, and asked for more information in that regard. He also requested more information on the results of the Office's demand-reduction strategy in the field and its potential for addressing the issue of trafficking, as well as on the very encouraging trend towards increased partnerships, in particular with the private sector.

13. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) requested more information on concrete action which could be taken to address the problem of organized crime and urban violence in Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, as well as programmes to encourage farmers in Asia, specifically Afghanistan, to cultivate alternative crops.

14. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) enquired as to what could be done to provide further assistance to African countries, where lack of resources and policy weaknesses were major problems. She welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on Transnational

Organized Crime and noted the support of developing countries for that instrument.

15. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), in response to the representative of Italy, said that his Office's index on organized crime showed that, whereas in the past the Southern countries had mainly been producers of drugs for the richer Northern countries, the drug problem had become more generalized and must therefore be addressed in a cooperative way, taking into account regional specificities. The problems of the poorer countries in Africa could be addressed by increased funding from donors, whereas the problems of the middle-income Eastern European countries could be addressed by funding at the regional level. There was promising work under way in the European Union but additional funding was needed, and he called on the Italian presidency of the European Union to address that issue.

16. In response to the representative of Austria, he said that his Office must strengthen its partnerships and serve as a catalyst for the most effective use of available resources. He noted that 90 per cent of his Office's budget was provided by some 20 donors, with the remaining 10 per cent coming from the United Nations regular budget, and welcomed cooperative efforts with middle-income States such as the Russian Federation, Brazil and Mexico to supplement those resources. Cooperation with the private sector, for example the efforts to combat kidnapping in Mexico, was an additional source of potential resources. Civil society was also an as yet untapped resource; in many countries people were ready to volunteer or work for relatively little pay to assist the Office in its work. Such efforts to complement and supplement the resources of his Office must be strengthened.

17. Replying to a question from the representative of Pakistan, he said production would increase as long as demand existed; when one drug disappeared another emerged to take its place. Opium production in the Golden Triangle was expected to be eradicated by 2006-2007, while in the Lao People's Democratic Republic production was being reduced by 20 per cent annually. Although opium production in eastern Myanmar was rapidly decreasing, that country was becoming a major source of synthetic drugs, for which there was no therapy. The only solution, therefore, was more effective worldwide prevention. On the subject of sub-Saharan Africa as a hotbed of organized crime in

addition to urban crime, a great deal of cocaine originating in Colombia found its way via the United States to Africa, an innocent and convenient transit area, as did heroin and opium from the East, and when sold domestically caused addiction.

18. UNODC would shortly be publishing an opium survey conducted in Afghanistan, but the prospects were gloomy. The problem was that in the opium economy the risk/reward balance was skewed, with mammoth rewards and minuscule risks to traffickers, owing to the low level of law enforcement. Income from cultivation and domestic trafficking alone amounted to 50 per cent of the country's gross national product. One possible remedy was to augment the risk by establishing additional interdictions; another was to provide poor farmers with assistance, without which they would not halt opium cultivation. An alternative-development project was urgently called for.

19. Regarding the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which had just entered into force, he could not explain why it had been ratified mostly by developing countries, but it had indeed been ratified by only one North American and three European countries. Perhaps the tardiness of other signatories stemmed not from any reservations on their part but from the fact that, taking the Convention seriously, they were embarked on the necessary but time-consuming process of liaison between the executive and legislative branches. In any event, he urged all countries to ratify the Convention as rapidly as possible.

20. **The Chairman** invited the Under-Secretary for Global Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico to address the Committee.

21. **Ms. Olamendi Olavarrieta** (Mexico), congratulating UNODC, and particularly its Executive Director, on the work accomplished, said it was important to share with the Committee that work, as well as the five-year review of progress in implementing the 1998 Political Declaration of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. She applauded the fact that most countries saw shared responsibility in drug matters as their main task, since producing countries had also become consumers and vice versa. Furthermore, the time was ripe for the Committee to discuss abolishing the concept of donor and receiving countries, for everyone had something to give to and

receive from the Committee. There persisted a view of donors as "good" countries and recipients as less good, but it was the concept of shared responsibility that was crucial, and Mexico would continue to be both donor and recipient. While most countries had programmes for fighting crime and drug trafficking, they also focused on prevention and the treatment of addicts. The more time and energy spent on fighting crime, the less could be devoted to addicts. There, too, responsibility should be shared, as highlighted in the Joint Ministerial Statement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (A/58/124).

22. An ideal instrument for combating drug trafficking and organized crime was the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, but only if ratified by all States, as emphasized at the ministerial segment of the Commission's session. Another valuable tool would be the new United Nations Convention against Corruption, since, corruption of government officials was the main cause of the escalation of organized crime, including the impunity with which drug barons brought enormous quantities of narcotics into most countries.

23. Another pertinent issue was whether or not certain drugs should be legalized. It was highly significant that although the Ministers had reiterated their commitment to address that issue, they claimed that they were reluctant to do so for reasons relating to the health of their populations. Since addiction, especially to synthetic drugs, was on the increase, authorities must fulfil their commitment to monitor the manufacture and transport of chemical precursors as a prerequisite for curbing the manufacture and distribution of synthetic drugs. Delegations should support the Joint Ministerial Statement, which warranted serious consideration in efforts to combat organized crime, especially drug trafficking. Unless all parties redoubled their efforts in a spirit of cooperation, they would not be equal to the task of fighting the production, transport and distribution of drugs. Mexico had embarked on that route and hoped to help build the drug-free world to which all present aspired.

24. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Rio Group subscribed entirely to the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and of the round-table discussion held during the ministerial segment of the session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Also, the Secretary-General's report on the quinquennial

evaluation of the outcome of the special session (A/58/253) enabled the Committee to follow the progress of the countries of the Group in their fight against drugs and the measures taken to combat the drug trade. Alarmed at the rapid increase in the illegal production of certain types of drugs in some regions, the Rio Group also realized that, in the Group's region as elsewhere, much remained to be done to fulfil the 1998 commitments.

25. Drugs endangered health, security and well-being, especially those of children and youth, undermined efforts to reduce poverty, and caused violence and crime, while the vast resources of the illicit drug economy reinforced criminal organizations, including terrorist groups, and increased the availability of instruments of war, some of which were recycled from past armed conflicts. The most affected countries' measures to combat drug trafficking, money-laundering and illicit arms traffic were of no avail in the absence of tangible results from both international and national efforts in the interest of peace and global security. Alas, despite recognition of the principle of shared responsibility in fighting drugs, the persisting imbalance in which a handful of nations assumed the cost of the struggle, while drug production and use were tolerated in others, further undermined international efforts and violated existing international provisions.

26. The countries of the Rio Group reaffirmed their intention to apply national and international strategies — such as education and training — for demand and supply reduction and for adherence to the principle of shared responsibility, subject to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-intervention in internal affairs. Convinced that illicit drug cultivation jeopardized States' economic development and the prosperity of their peoples, the Group assigned high priority to its eradication. That called for sound international cooperation, alternative development and access to markets. In that regard, he commended the technical cooperation provided by UNODC and called for a greater financial commitment on the part of developed countries, international financial institutions, regional development banks and non-governmental organizations.

27. The Group urged UNODC to continue its support to transit States through new technical-assistance programmes on data collection, equipment for advanced operations, and consideration of projects for

cross-border and regional cooperation and alternative development. He recommended that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should be given greater decision-making power and continue to broker consultations among Member States on all matters linked to the world drug problem. The Group would continue to encourage cooperation within the region and outside it, and with regional bodies, without discrimination, to promote coordinated action in all areas, including the participation of civil society, to help the developing countries combat the global drug problem in all its manifestations.

28. **Ms. Cornacchia** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland and Norway, acknowledged the United Nations pivotal role in developing strategies for fighting all forms of crime and protecting freedom and security. In that connection, she commended the work of the pertinent United Nations bodies strengthening national crime-prevention and criminal-justice systems. The European Union firmly supported UNODC's activities, especially its development of universal legal instruments and provision of technical cooperation to developing countries and those in transition, as attested to by the extent of complementarity between that Office and the European Union.

29. New impetus must be given to the fight against organized crime, which undermined the rule of law. She welcomed the recent entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which, together with its three protocols, was the key international instrument for combating the phenomenon, as well as the planned entry into force by the end of 2003 of its protocol on trafficking in human beings. The European Union looked forward to active participation in the preparation of the rules of procedure and in the first Conference of the Parties, in June 2004. She urged countries to accelerate ratification of the Convention and the protocols so that a maximum of signatories could attend the Conference, and praised UNODC for its technical support and legal assistance to Member States in that regard.

30. The next crucial step would be the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which would contain, in addition to legal provisions,

measures to prevent corruption, a phenomenon that caused reduced investment or even disinvestment and had the greatest impact on the most destitute — and hence most vulnerable — social strata. Sustainable anti-corruption solutions and a comprehensive, balanced network of effective measures could only be achieved through prevention, criminalization, international cooperation, and monitoring and refund mechanisms. An active member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Negotiation of the Convention, the European Union welcomed the fact that the new legal instrument would be open for signature by the end of 2003, and Mexico's offer to host a high-level conference for the signing of the Convention.

31. She applauded the strengthened UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch and the 2002 launch of the Global Programme against Terrorism, which complemented the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council by guiding Member States through legislation and implementation of the relevant international instruments, which it had already done in over 30 countries in 2003. UNODC's reorganization would strengthen its effectiveness, optimizing resource allocation as approved by the competent commissions. She also called for further strengthening of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, as requested in General Assembly resolutions.

32. Turning to international drug control, he welcomed the opportunity afforded by the recent Joint Ministerial Statement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for Member States to undertake a midterm review of their progress in implementing the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Not only should the drug problem be tackled on the basis of shared responsibility; other essential tools were data collection and analysis, and evaluation of the results of drug-control policies. Production and trafficking being directly linked to demand, all efforts should focus on a balanced approach, as stressed by the European Union in the Commission.

33. The alarming growth of illicit production and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including amphetamines, posed new challenges for supply reduction and international law-enforcement cooperation. The increasing recreational use of such substances by young people was alarming and needed to be tackled through consistent school-based

prevention programmes with family and local-community involvement. The report of the Executive Director of UNODC on synthetic drugs constituted an authoritative warning that due consideration must be given to possible ways of fighting that new threat. The European Union was concerned by the continuing links between drug trafficking and terrorism and other national and transnational criminal activities.

34. The European Union supported another focus of the Commission, namely the need to encourage crop substitution by poppy and coca growers, and urged States and UNODC to intensify their efforts, especially in Afghanistan. Illicit production of drug crops could be reduced by alternative development, thereby improving the quality of life of target populations. She encouraged the relevant United Nations agencies to mainstream drug-control issues into their programmes. Training, technical assistance, coordination and information exchange among States were the priorities of effective cooperation, based on a policy mix that included prevention, law enforcement, risk reduction, treatment and reintegration of drug users, and alternative development.

35. Since it was vital that UNODC must continue to play a primary role in global coordination of counter-narcotics activity, the European Union recommended that a sufficient share of the regular budget should be allocated to its programme to enable it to fulfil its mandates. Given the European Union's efforts in that field — particularly its Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Drugs — it looked forward to further cooperation with the Office.

36. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil) said that Brazil welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and would ratify it in the near future. It was also encouraged that the negotiations concerning a Convention against Corruption would soon be concluded, as corruption was a serious impediment to social development.

37. Since trafficking in human beings clearly had a transnational dimension, international cooperation to create mechanisms to combat that scourge was more important than ever. Coordination between public and civil-society initiatives was also needed.

38. His delegation reaffirmed its support for a multilateral approach to the problems of illicit drug consumption and trafficking and related crimes. Brazil

had devised a national anti-drug policy which took into consideration both demand and supply. Drug-related problems also had an international dimension, since production and consumption were interrelated. Brazil had ratified the main international treaties in that area and had established regional and bilateral cooperation that recognized the need for shared responsibility in the control of illicit drug trafficking. That cooperation would also aid in the fight against corruption.

39. **Mr. Cumberbatch Miguén** (Cuba) said that the problem of illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking continued to grow despite national and international efforts. International cooperation should be based on respect for international law and the Charter, especially the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and renunciation of the threat and use of force.

40. Cuba had demonstrated its willingness to prevent drug trafficking in its territory and had implemented strong measures against its use as a natural route towards the United States of America, which was a huge centre of drug consumption. It had repeatedly expressed its willingness to cooperate with the United States authorities to fight drug trafficking, and had imposed no conditions related to the blockade on that cooperation, yet its proposals had been rejected repeatedly.

41. His delegation commended the work of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, as well as that of the International Narcotics Control Board as the only independent authority with international scope to provide an objective assessment of States' efforts to consolidate a world drug-control policy and develop effective international cooperation. Cuba had strengthened its exchanges with both institutions, which had led to enhanced training and technical support for its personnel. It would continue to contribute its available resources to combat drugs in the Caribbean region. Criminal legislation in that area had been strengthened and measures against money-laundering enforced.

42. **Mr. Maertens (Belgium)**, *Vice-Chairman*, took the Chair.

43. **Mr. Xie Bohua** (China) said that, in implementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the parties should respect the principles of sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit. Regional and global cooperation mechanisms should be established, and

assistance to developing countries increased to build their capacity to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.

44. China had been an active participant in the drafting of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, now awaiting adoption, and appealed to all countries to strengthen their efforts to allow the Convention to play its proper role. His Government had taken a comprehensive approach to the problem: while meting out severe punishment for corruption, it was building a fair, transparent, clean and efficient government. While adopting measures based on its own specific conditions, it would continue to participate in exchanges and cooperation with other nations, regions and international organizations.

45. Counter-terrorism had become a key part of crime prevention, and China had become party to 10 international conventions in that area. It supported the strengthening of cooperation against terrorism under the coordination of the Security Council.

46. **Mr. Musumbachime** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that, at the ministerial segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Ministers and government representatives had emphasized that the world drug problem must be addressed in multilateral, bilateral, regional and national settings, supported by strong international development cooperation according to the principle of shared responsibility. Continued financial and technical support remained imperative. Five years after the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the drug problem was still a global challenge, and efforts to attain the goals set must be enhanced.

47. SADC welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which provided the international community with the means to respond to the increasing globalization of organized crime. It also welcomed the consensus reached on the text of the draft Convention against Corruption, and hoped that it could be adopted without delay. There was a growing awareness that combating corruption was integral to Governments' efforts to achieve effectiveness, fairness and efficiency. SADC also welcomed the involvement of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the international campaign against terrorism.

48. Within the SADC member countries, drug abuse and trafficking remained a matter of grave concern. It jeopardized the development of human capital and compromised economic development because of its destabilizing effects on the State, the economy and civil society. Drug trafficking attracted inflows of illicit profits that contributed to overvalued exchange rates, income inequality and money-laundering. It had also led to an increase in related crime, affecting not just the economy but also the social fabric of those countries.

49. In response to the situation, SADC countries had demonstrated high-level political involvement in campaigns against drug trafficking and abuse, and had improved capacity-building and coordination in drug control. Members had developed national drug-control strategies, which were in the process of implementation, in partnership with non-governmental organizations.

50. Despite extensive efforts to combat crime and drug abuse within SADC, those efforts were not sufficient. As developing countries, its members were confronted with many development problems, including the lack of financial resources. They therefore needed technical assistance and funding in their efforts to fight drug trafficking and abuse and to improve crime prevention and criminal justice.

51. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that drugs and crime threatened all countries, irrespective of economic and demographic conditions. Therefore, support for law-enforcement institutions must be mainstreamed into overall efforts to achieve sustainable development. In many cases, for instance Afghanistan, those institutions must be created from scratch. His Government was optimistic that there was a growing international appreciation for the link between development and law enforcement: corruption and lack of law enforcement hindered socio-economic development, and it was therefore committed to treating law-enforcement assistance as development assistance.

52. Another dangerous global trend was the increased involvement of organized crime with trafficking in persons. Like other forms of transnational organized crime, trafficking in persons had critical implications for regional and national stability and threatened the rule of law, democracy and economic prosperity. The damage inflicted by trafficking extended beyond the victims and their families, however. Terrorists were

increasingly relying on the resources of organized crime to finance their operations, and they were drawn to the profits generated and the infrastructure established by traffickers, such as document forgers, corrupt border police, money-laundering and access to weapons.

53. Although such issues had not always been considered among foreign-policy priorities of many Governments, the past several years had seen successful international anti-drug and crime efforts, and strong cross-border and regional collaboration was closing in on the human traffickers as well. The conclusion of negotiations on the Convention against Corruption and the entry into force of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime were landmark achievements in the efforts to develop a global infrastructure against crime and corruption. His Government was reviewing the latter Convention and hoped to ratify it in the near future.

54. The application of those new legal instruments would provide Governments with additional tools against transnational threats, but resources, personnel and political capital would need to be devoted towards fulfilling those obligations. His Government would continue to support its international partners in that endeavour.

55. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) said that, in September 2003, Egypt had hosted a conference of ministers of justice of French-speaking countries, held in conjunction with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Francophone Organization, the aim being to promote ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. The Declaration and report of the conference would be circulated at the current session of the General Assembly. She hoped for additions to the number of recent signatories to the Convention, which was evidence of the determination of the international community to counter crime wherever it occurred. She also welcomed its recent entry into force and the impending entry into force of two of its protocols. She welcomed the Joint Ministerial Statement issued following the ministerial segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as well as the international efforts to implement the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. She was concerned, however, that the lenient attitudes to illegal drug-taking in some parts of the world would hamper such efforts,

the importance of which had been emphasized by the Commission and in the Joint Ministerial Statement. She underscored the ministerial recommendation concerning national drug-control strategies and the measures proposed with a view to achieving a significant reduction of drug abuse by 2008.

56. Despite the international, regional and local efforts to combat illicit use and trafficking, the drug problem persisted, posing both a challenge and an obstacle to development. She reiterated the need to tackle the underlying causes, such as unemployment, violence and, specifically, poverty. She also called for further international cooperation to eliminate the problem, with particular focus on assistance to the developing countries affected by it, not least in view of its adverse transboundary repercussions on the economic, social, health and moral fronts.

57. **Ms. Boiko** (Ukraine) said that the Tenth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had called upon the international community to take concerted action to address the challenges posed by transnational crime. As a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Ukraine would welcome technical assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to adapt national legislation to the provisions of the Convention and its protocols.

58. Ukraine welcomed the consensus reached by the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Negotiation of a Convention against Corruption, which was a truly global response to a worldwide problem. Combating corruption was one of the country's priorities, and substantial efforts had been made to improve its capacity to fight crime and corruption, which had led to a significant reduction in the level of corruption.

59. International terrorism had now become a part of transnational crime and, in order to implement the Security Council resolutions, Ukraine had put in place measures to prevent the use of its territory by international terrorist organizations.

60. The problem of human trafficking was another challenge to human security. Over the past decade, thousands of young Ukrainian women had been trafficked in different parts of the world, and legislation had been adopted to intensify the fight against that crime. Ukraine urged States and relevant international organizations to develop national, regional and international strategies to complement the

work of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

61. Drug trafficking continued to pose a serious threat to public health and national security, while drug addiction, HIV/AIDS, and the use by organized crime and terrorist groups of the proceeds of opium trafficking had the potential to destabilize the whole region. Ukraine had become a major transit point for international drug trafficking, owing to its location, a developed transportation network, and many underused chemical companies that could potentially be used by criminals. The State was endeavouring to remedy the situation and accorded great importance to international cooperation. In that respect, a protocol on cooperation to combat drug and arms trafficking had been signed with the neighbouring Republic of Moldova, and agreement had been reached on the establishment of a virtual law-enforcement centre and inter-State information analysis system for the GUUAM Group (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova).

62. **Mr. Swe** (Myanmar) said that recent reports showed that significant progress had been made by States in reducing the cultivation of illicit crops through a balanced programme of eradication, alternative development and law enforcement. It was essential that international cooperation should be made available to encourage alternative development in order to ensure that such cultivation was not merely relocated to other areas.

63. Myanmar had made significant progress in its efforts to eradicate opium-poppy cultivation and had initiated a plan to eradicate narcotic drugs by 2014. There had been a 70 per cent decline in opium production over the past 10 years, owing to the Government's political commitment, which had been translated into concrete action, including crop-substitution programmes, new roads, expanded energy and electricity supply, and the development of new markets to provide alternative sources of income for poppy growers. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was collaborating with such efforts and Myanmar greatly appreciated the support of the United Nations, donor countries and neighbours in its fight to control the production of narcotic drugs. In that respect, Myanmar had concluded bilateral cooperation agreements with Bangladesh, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, the Russia Federation, Thailand and Viet Nam.

64. A campaign was also being waged against the emerging threat posed by amphetamine-type stimulants and, since 1999, Myanmar had seized sizeable quantities of precursors, in collaboration with neighbouring countries, including China, India and Thailand. In the fight against narcotic drugs, sustained national, regional and international efforts were needed.

65. **Ms. Ito** (Japan) said that Japan was taking steps to ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime at the earliest possible date. It had also signed the three protocols, and considered the practice of trafficking in persons to be among the most serious of crimes. It had made every effort to combat that crime by strengthening law enforcement, enhancing regional and international cooperation and providing assistance to victims.

66. Japan had taken an active part in deliberations on the draft United Nations Convention against Corruption, and welcomed its completion. It would proceed to take the necessary legislative steps to sign and ratify the Convention.

67. With regard to international drug control, Japan had renewed its five-year strategy to strengthen domestic measures and promote international cooperation. It was deeply concerned by the increasing illicit production and trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants in north-east Asia. The ease of their production and trafficking contributed to the rapid spread of their use, particularly among young people, and Japan believed that those substances would present the single most serious drug problem in the world in the coming years. Since they were mostly smuggled into the country by sea, international cooperation and strengthening border controls were essential. Japan therefore welcomed the recent activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board, which underscored the problem of amphetamine-type stimulants.

68. Lastly, Japan reaffirmed its commitment to international cooperation to free the world from the threat of crime and drugs.

69. **Mr. Ivanou** (Belarus), speaking also on behalf of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, said that the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should help further the development of relevant

legal standards and strengthen international cooperation to combat the most dangerous forms of criminal activity threatening the social and economic development of every nation.

70. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, under its current Executive Director, was now increasingly focusing on priority issues such as the provision of technical assistance to States in crime prevention and criminal-justice reform. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime provided the international community with an appropriate legislative mechanism to combat that scourge. It was to be hoped that the draft United Nations Convention against Corruption would also be presented for adoption at the earliest opportunity.

71. Crucially, at the regional level, various joint initiatives had been launched to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, illicit migration and smuggling under the Inter-State Programme of Joint Measures to Combat Crime for the Period 2003-2004 and the Programme of the Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for Combating International Terrorism and Other Manifestations of Extremism to the Year 2004. CIS countries were also working to further refine a database for strengthening cooperation on counter-terrorism within the Commonwealth, currently containing 400,000 entries. A joint working group was also operating successfully in the area of situation analysis and information exchange.

72. Significant progress had also been achieved within the CIS in broadening the legal basis for cooperation between law-enforcement agencies. Successful cooperation was also under way to combat illicit migration and crime on board vehicular transport.

73. The countries on whose behalf he spoke were committed to promoting expansion of cooperation among relevant CIS agencies and between CIS countries and the United Nations and other international organizations.

74. **Mr. Zeidan** (Lebanon) said that, in order to prevent crime, it was necessary to tackle the causes and, above all, to reduce the risk of crime by identifying high-risk areas. In Lebanon, legislators, aware of the need to combat corruption and money-laundering, had included the offence of corruption in the Penal Code. Likewise, enrichment resulting from corruption, influence-trafficking or abuse of power was

now a criminal offence and assets could be seized, as bank secrecy was no longer applicable in such cases.

75. Following the measures that the Government had taken against money-laundering and related problems, the Financial Action Task Force of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had struck Lebanon off the list of "Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories".

76. Lebanon particularly appreciated the technical-assistance programmes offered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. They had enabled it to improve the capabilities of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, and to increase public awareness about corruption. New goals had been established, in particular that of raising awareness among youth. While the opportunities for corruption had increased, the means of detecting it had also increased; thus, because the phenomenon had become more visible, society appeared to be more corrupt. The fight against corruption must continue, based on the principle that every act of corruption involved both parties.

77. States bore the principal responsibility for crime prevention and control; but international cooperation was essential to help society respond to the challenges.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.